Strides Taken for Tanks Systems

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The Underground Storage Tank Section (Waste and Tank Management Bureau) has focused these past 2 years on educating tank owners and operators on the environmental hazards that aging underground storage tank systems create.

Underground storage tanks are considered by the program to reach the end of their useful life at 30 years. There are hundreds of these older tank systems throughout Montana. Unfortunately, facility owners/operators often do not understand the environmental risk that older storage tank system present, or how system life may be extended with appropriate techniques and the use of redundant leak detection methods.

To address the concerns of aging tank systems in Montana, the section applied for and received tentative federal funding to develop a model that will create and assess a risk profile for each underground storage tank system. This will give the section additional capacity to inform and educate facility owners on the risk factors associated with aging tank systems.

The scope of work for this effort is to develop the schema for risk profiling underground storage tank systems based on the system equipment installed, the age of the various system components and the methods of leak detection in use. The expected federal grant funding will also include an automated software application as part of the ongoing TREADS database project that will capture the modeling criteria and provide real time updates to the risk measurement values when system equipment or leak detection method changes occur.

This risk assessment model will greatly enhance the section's ability to evaluate and educate owners as to how they may reduce tank system failures and the evolving environmental threat their systems create as tank system near the end of their design life. The section expects that this information will form the basis for facility owners to develop internal capital improvement plans that address various system risk factors.